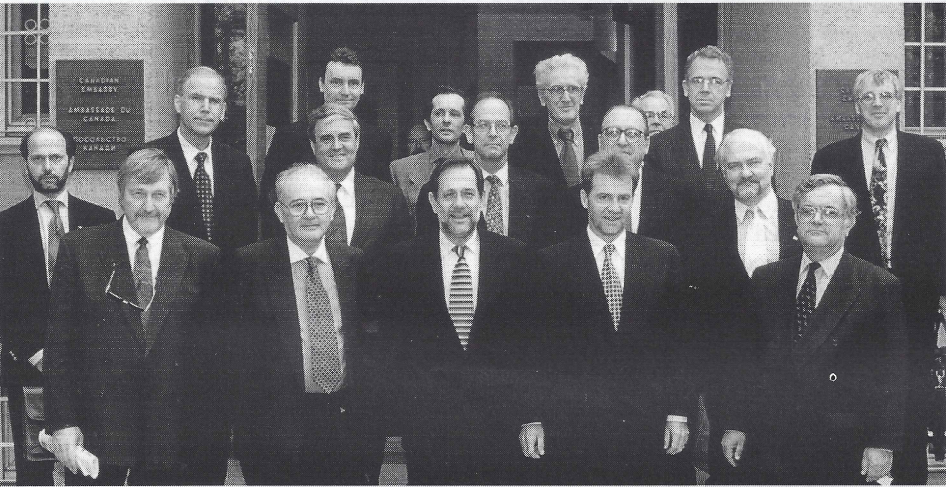


NATO Opens Information Office



Top: Signing documents opening NATO's Office in Ukraine, Secretary-General Xavier Solana (l) and Ukraine's Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udoenko (r). Bottom: NATO country Ambassadors meet in Kyiv. The NATO Office is headed by Canadian diplomat Roman Lischynsky - 2nd row, 2nd from right; also in photo - Canadian Amb. Christopher Westdal - front row 2nd from right.

May 7, 1997, Kyiv... Welcoming a new phase in relations between NATO and Ukraine, Secretary-General Xavier Solana opened a NATO Documentation and Information Centre "to illustrate the high regard the allies have for Ukraine."

"The alliance acknowledges that Ukraine has an important and even unique place in the European security order. An independent, democratic and stable Ukraine is one of the key factors of stability and security in Europe. Its geographic position gives it a major role and responsibility. Ukraine's decision to renounce nuclear weapons and to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty greatly contributed to the strengthening of security and stability in Europe. It has earned Ukraine special stature in the world community," said Mr. Solana, after a full day of meetings with President Leonid Kuchma, Verkhovna Rada Chairman Oleksander Moroz and Foreign Minister

Hennadiy Udoenko.

"We want to develop a document which will see the NATO-Ukraine relationship go beyond what we have today," he said, addressing a meeting organized by Ukraine's Association of Journalists (see adjoining story on the NATO-Ukraine Charter, p. 8). It is important, therefore, that NATO becomes fully transparent and understood in this country," continued Mr. Solana.

Volodymyr Horbulin, Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, in a letter to the Verkhovna Rada said Ukraine is re-thinking its official policy of neutrality and that this status can be viewed "only conditionally." He said although Ukraine is not officially even considering applying for NATO membership, it cannot have absolute neutral and non-aligned status, given its sensitive geopolitical position.

Ukraine's active and enthusiastic participation in the Partnership for Peace Program. In May, the Alliance opened a NATO Documentation and Information Centre in Kyiv, the first of its kind in any Partner country "in order to make information available on the Alliance to the Ukrainian people" [see story on this page].

U.S.-Ukraine Relations Strengthen

May-July, 1997... Working visits to Washington by President Kuchma and a meeting of the first session of the Ukrainian-American Commission on Multilateral Cooperation focused attention on Ukraine's urgent security and economic mission. Kuchma and Vice-President Gore signed a joint declaration that stressed that cooperation reflects the national interests of both countries. The U.S. Administration is to work with Congress to make it prolong the trade preferences granted to Ukraine, as well as to grant Ukraine the status of the most favoured nation in trade with the U.S.

The Kuchma-Gore Commission also signed a joint initiative on reforming Ukraine's natural gas sector, removing obstacles for broader American investment in this sector, and stressing the commitments of the Ukrainian Government to liberalize economic relations in such areas as agriculture. A highlight of Ukrainian-American space cooperation is the flight of a Ukrainian astronaut on board the U.S. space shuttle and the upcoming civil space project in the areas of telecommunications and telemedicine. An agreement was also signed on cooperation in civil aviation.

Udoenko to Chair UN Assembly

July, 1997... Ukraine's Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udoenko will chair the 52nd United Nations Assembly, following his nomination by the East European Regional group of UN member countries. The session is to be decisive in reforming the UN and strengthening its global role. "Udoenko's a very distinguished diplomat," said UN Secretary General Koffi Annan in praising the nomination, adding, "It's very important that he lead the United Nations during these difficult times."